United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ UNPROFOR to begin talks tomorrow with Commanders of Bosnian Armed Forces and Bosnian Serb Army with view to cease-fire; Special Representative Akashi urges parties to build on recent peace progress; United Nations observers report attacks against Gorazde have ceased.

+ Secretary-General, on second day of Belarus visit, meets with President Grib and Prime Minister Kebich; promises continuing United Nations support in coping with consequences of Chernobyl disaster.

+ United Nations expresses concern about recent attacks on foreigners in northern Iraq; Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to review situation with United States, United Kingdom and France tomorrow.

+ United Nations launches inter-agency appeal for $38 million to aid 600,000 refugees in Tajikistan through December.

+ Equitable economic development is best guarantee for international peace and security, speakers tell Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations.

+ Democratic People's Republic of Korea says it will accept negotiated solution to nuclear issue if United States ends international campaign against it, alleging "war provocation moves."

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The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Michael Rose, will begin talks tomorrow with the Commanders of the Bosnian Armed Forces and the Bosnian Serb Army in the hope of establishing a cease-fire along the confrontation lines between the two sides. The Secretary-General's Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, gave instructions for the talks to begin after positive meetings earlier today with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and Bosnian Serbs leader Radovan Karadzic.

Mr. Akashi said the talks would allow the Bosnian parties to build on the peace progress achieved in recent weeks, according to a United Nations

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spokesman. He called on them to seize the opportunity to end the conflict which their people had endured for the last two years.

In a related development, United Nations military observers today reported that Gorazde was no longer under attack, and Mr. Akashi received assurances from the Bosnian Serbs that military action against the town would not resume.

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Continuing his official visit to Belarus, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today had meetings with President Miacheslav Grib, Prime Minister Viacheslav Kebich, and Vice-Prime Minister Ivan Kenik. Among the issues discussed during the meetings were the continuing effects of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to promote nuclear safety, according to a United Nations spokesman. President Grib recalled that Belarus had renounced nuclear weapons and had acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear State. The Secretary-General assured the President that the United Nations would continue to do its utmost to assist Belarus in coping with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

On arriving in Belarus from the Russian Federation yesterday, the Secretary-General met with Foreign Minister Petr Kravchanka. They discussed, among other issues, the reform and strengthening of the United Nations, disarmament, peace-keeping operations, and cooperation between Belarus and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The Secretary-General then met with the Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Ivan Korotchenya, and congratulated him on the Commonwealth's attainment of observer status in the General Assembly.

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The United Nations is extremely concerned about the increasing number of attacks on foreigners in northern Iraq, and about the effect on its operations in the area, a spokesman for the Organization said today. Two United Nations guards were attacked yesterday, and one -- a Danish national -- was shot in the chest and seriously wounded. On Sunday, an Agence France Presse correspondent and her bodyguard were killed by gunmen in an incident which Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has deplored. Late last month, a helicopter was damaged by a mob while evacuating two United Nations guards suffering from gunshot wounds received in an earlier ambush.

The spokesman noted that the mandate of the United Nations guards had been clearly outlined in a memorandum of understanding signed with Iraq. It included supporting the humanitarian programme in the north of the country and protecting United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel there. Peter Hansen, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, was following developments very closely, and would meet tomorrow with the Permanent Missions of the United States, United Kingdom and France to discuss the situation, the spokesman added.

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The United Nations today launched a consolidated inter-agency appeal for $37.8 million to aid some 600,000 refugees and displaced people in Tajikistan between now and December. The crisis there was caused by internal strife following the break-up of the Soviet Union. Relative calm has since been restored, but deteriorating economic and social conditions remain a problem, according to a United Nations spokesman. Immediate action is needed not only to stop further suffering in Tajikistan, but also to prevent the crisis from affecting neighbouring States.

United Nations agencies, working closely with non-governmental organizations, will aid the reconstruction of destroyed homes and provide food and medicine to refugees in Tajikistan. The spokesman noted that the United Kingdom had already announced a contribution of $1.5 million towards the appeal.

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Equitable economic development is the best guarantee for international peace and security, several speakers told the Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations yesterday. The Committee is meeting at Headquarters to conduct a comprehensive review of those operations. Speakers also urged that the United Nations balance its focus on peace-keeping with a corresponding emphasis on development programmes.

The Cuban observer expressed concern that some peace-keeping operations were being extended year after year. He said conflicts would contiune unless development was promoted, and warned that the United Nations would be involved in an arms build-up that would erode its credibility. The Russian representative stressed the need for integration between the Organization and regional and subregional organizations. He called for the creation of a capable and efficient system of collective security, with global and regional levels strengthening each other.

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The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has said that if the United States ends the "international pressure campaign" against it, it will not oppose a negotiated solution to the ongoing nuclear issue. In a letter to the Security Council dated 4 April, containing comments by a Foreign Ministry spokesman, the People's Republic accused the United States of making "war provocation moves" against it. The United States did not want to resolve the issue through negotiations, it said, vowing to counter any pressure "to the end."

The People's Republic contended that it was not obliged to accept a full inspection of its facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pursuant to the nuclear Safeguards Agreement. The country also claimed a unique status after the temporary suspension of its declared withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It said it had

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agreed to last month's IAEA inspection only to maintain continuity of safeguards, and had honestly discharged its obligations. The letter went on to say that the Security Council should not argue about the People's Republic, which was the victim in the case, but should argue about the United States, which was the assaulter.

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